

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EDITORIAL IN IRISH TIMES MAY 11, 1977

FOLLOWING EDITORIAL APPEARED IN IRISH TIMES MAY 11, 1977
UNDER HEADING WESTERN DEFENCE:

PRESIDENT CARTER'S ATTITUDE TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION IS MORE CLEARLY DEFINED THAN HIS WORLD ECONOMIC POLICY. WHAT HE SAID YESTERDAY ABOUT WESTERN DEFENCE WAS, BROADLY, PRACTICAL AND SENSIBLE. HE HAS PUT HIS FINGER ON THE MAIN POINT AT ISSUE BY CALLING FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE WEST'S CONVENTIONAL FORCES, AND BY INSISTING ON THE NEED FOR STANDARDISATION. HE KNOWS FULL WELL THAT THE NUCLEAR CAPACITY OF THE US IS CONSIDERABLY SUPERIOR TO THAT OF THE SOVIET UNION. HE ALSO KNOWS THAT THERE IS UNIVERSAL DESIRE TO AVOID A NUCLEAR CONFLICT, WHICH MEANS INCIDENTALLY, THAT THERE ARE STILL ENOUGH STUPID PEOPLE WHO WOULD SETTLE FOR BEING KILLED BY BOMB OR BULLET IN PREFERENCE TO BEING BURNED TO A SHADOW IN A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION.

ALL KINDS OF VIOLENCE ARE DISGUSTING; BUT THERE IS NO DENYING THE FACT THAT PROGRESS TOWARDS DISARMAMENT MUST PROCEED BY STAGES. NATIONS ARE AS NERVOUS AS INDIVIDUALS, AND, TO THAT EXTENT, MUST BE GIVEN EQUAL COMPASSION. MR. CARTER HAS NO ILLUSIONS: HE SAID
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YESTERDAY, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE BUILD-UP OF THE WARSAW PACT'S CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN EASTERN EUROPE " EMPHASISED AN OFFENSIVE POSITION." THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT AT ALL; AND THE FRANTIC EXTENSION OF SOVIET NAVAL FORCES, IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE INDIAN OCEAN, ALSO HIGHLIGHTS A WARNING TO THE WEST.

THE KEY-WORD, HOWEVER, IS "CONVENTIONAL," SO FAR AS THIS DISCUSSION IS CONCERNED. MR. CARTER MADE CLEAR HIS DISTASTE OF THE ENTIRE ISSUE WHEN HE PLEADED THAT EUROPE- AS A WHOLE AND UNDIVIDED CONTINENT - SHOULD BE HELPED TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF A PEACEFUL SOCIETY. THIS IS THE KIND OF DIRECT AND NO-NONSENSE TALK WHICH IS BADLY NEEDED. THE PRESIDENT MAKES NO APOLOGY FOR HIS EVANGELISATION ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRONT - WHICH ALSO, OF COURSE, IS AT THE HEART OF HIS CALL FOR PEACE.

DETENTE REMAINS OF THE FIRST IMPORTANCE. MR. CARTER IS MORE INTENT ON REASSURING THE RUSSIANS THAN ON AGGRAVATING THEM - WHICH IS MORE THAN CAN BE SAID FOR MOST OF HIS IMMEDIATE PREDECESSORS. THERE ARE SOME URLY PROBLEMS FACING NATO (IN CYPRUS AND BERLIN, TO NAME ONLY TWO), BUT THE INTENTION TO KEEP THE FABRIC SECURE HAS BEEN CLARIFIED BY MR. CARTER. KRENE

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